

TRANSPORT AMPHORAS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 7th – BEGINNING OF THE 6th CENT. BC IN HISTRIA

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Keywords: *Histria, transport amphoras, archaic period, East Greek pottery, sanctuary.*

Abstract: *Recent excavations in the North-Eastern sanctuary („Sacred Area“) at Histria provided some contexts earlier than the phase of the first limestone temples, as well as a number of fragments of Middle Archaic pottery. Starting from a context near the temple of Aphrodite the present article analyses the evidence of one category of these early finds, namely the transport amphoras. The spectrum of amphora types from Histria finds parallels mainly in the Early Ionian colonies from the Black Sea area, such as Berezan/Borysthenes, Olbia, Taganrog, Orgame and Apollonia.*

The discussions concerning the beginnings of amphora imports in the Black Sea area have a long history¹, but detailed studies are recent² and they have regarded especially complete specimens. These beginnings coincide in date with those of fine pottery, both in the Greek colonies and in their hinterland³. The earliest known amphoras do not seem to go beyond the middle of the third quarter of the 7th century, when the first settlements were founded: Histria, Borysthenes (Berezan), Olbia, Orgame and Taganrog, followed soon by Apollonia.

Barring Sinope, for which the documentation is poor, there are numerous contributions, some monographs or monographs chapters on Archaic amphora imports for the Greek colonies in the Black Sea area⁴. Histria, Orgame, Taganrog

First of all I would like to thank the organisers, Vasilica Lungu, Livia Buzoianu and Pierre Dupont, who have invited me at the Patabs conference in Constanța. For improving my English and for suggestions I would like to thank prof. Kees Neef (Amsterdam). For illustrations I would like to thank my wife, Florina.

¹ LAMBRINO 1938, p. 101.

² DUPONT & SKARLATIDOU 2005.

³ on early East Greek painted pottery at the Black Sea, see now KERSCHNER 2006.

⁴ Berezan: DUPONT 2005 b; ČISTOV 2006, p. 57-112; ČISTOV *et al.* 2012; Olbia: LEJPUNSKAJA 1981; Taganrog: KOPYLOV & LARENOK 1994; Orgame: MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2008; Histria: DUPONT 2005 a; BÎRZESCU 2012.

and Borysthene, having many early imports, the range of types does not differ very much from one settlement to another.

Excavations in the Near East have now yielded a good chronological framework. The destruction layers of Ashkelon, Tel Miqne-Ekron, Tel Batash-Timnah, Meshad Hashavyahu and Tel Kabri, all destroyed by Nebukadnezar II (605-562 BC)⁵, have provided us reference points for East Greek amphoras, which have many parallels in the early colonies of the Black Sea. New finds in various other regions have given us a better understanding of the production centers, enabling to sketch the evolution of various amphora types from the end of the 8th cent. until the beginning of the 6th cent. BC⁶. As stated above, up to the present no transport amphora discovered in the Black Sea area can be dated earlier than the third quarter of the 7th century BC. The last quarter of the 7th cent. BC saw an increase in imports and also number of workshops.

A context, His 2006 T 30, brought to light during recent archaeological excavations in the North-Eastern sanctuary (the so called "Sacred Area") of Histria, offers a good picture over the earliest amphora imports⁷. Not far from the temple of Aphrodite (*fig. 1*), directly on bedrock, was carved a small hole, from which was investigated a surface of 2.70 x 1.70 m, maximum depth 0.16 m (*fig. 2-3*). The filling, datable in the first third of 6th cent. contained fragments of three or four North Ionian bird bowls (one illustrated at *fig. 4*), an animal frieze bowl (*fig. 5*), an Ionian banded olpe (*fig. 6*), an Aeginetan? cooking pot (*fig. 7*) and several fragments of amphoras from Miletus, Samos, Chios, Aeolis, Athens and an unknown centre⁸, with other reused small sherds. From among the fine pottery, fragments of bird-bowls date the fill⁹. The shape and especially the rendering of the bird, with the feet hanging loose, standing on no ground, set these pots at the end of the bird bowls series. As to the amphoras, they belong to East Greek and Attic types known in Histria and other early Greek settlements at the Black Sea.

First we should taken into consideration a type of **Milesian** amphoras, characterized by a relatively short neck with three ridges under the rim. Between the neck and the shoulder runs a shallow groove. This type can be reconstructed thanks to numerous examples discussed over the last two decades¹⁰. His 06 T 30 has yielded three such amphoras (*fig. 8-10, 30-31*), one of which heavily burnt. Complete pieces have been discovered at Histria in contexts dating from the end of the 7th century – beginning of the 6th century BC¹¹. In the Black Sea area, these

⁵ WALDBAUM 2011, p. 127-142; with old literature, s. also FANTALKIN 2011.

⁶ for ex. the amphoras from Methone, see BESIOS, TZIPHOUPOULOS, KOTSONAS 2012.

⁷ About the excavations in this area, see AVRAM *et al.* 2013, p. 54, pl. 17 b.

⁸ with two exceptions, the fragments were recently published, s. BÎRZESCU 2012, p. 353 with the indication on the catalogue no.

⁹ often in Histria, see LAMBRINO 1938, p. 39, fig. 7-8; DIMITRIU 1966, p. 42; ALEXANDRESCU 1978, p. 58-59. About this late type, see COLDSTREAM 1988, p. 300, and recently KERSCHNER 1995, types V and VI; KERSCHNER 2001, p. 79.

¹⁰ RUBAN 1991, p. 182-183; DUPONT 1998, p. 174; SEIFERT 2004, p. 16; NASO 2005, p. 75-76; SEZGIN 2012a, p. 147-153, types Mil2 and 3.

¹¹ A complete amphora was found in a well, DOMĂNEANȚU 2006, p. 77, 89, fig. 1, 2.

vessels appear only in early settlements such as Borysthenes¹², Orgame¹³, Taganrog¹⁴ and Jagorlyk¹⁵. They are also relatively often found in Scythian tombs: Repjahovataja¹⁶ and Liubotin¹⁷. The production of these amphoras ends about 580/570 BC.

Another Milesian type, attested by a single fragment from elsewhere in the Sacred Area, can be discussed here. It shows a painted decoration with bands. Like the other type it enjoyed a wide distribution as well. Contexts from Mezhad Hashavyahu, Siris, Metapont, Milet and Kommos show that such vessels were in use in the second half of 7th century¹⁸.

Samian amphoras in Histria date between the last quarter of 7th and the beginning of 6th century BC¹⁹. They have a distinctive short neck, a torus rim with flattened lip, a ridge in the lower part of the neck. Two fragmentary necks have been found in the context south of Aphrodite temple (*fig. 11-12*). The Samian amphoras are not rare at the end of the 7th century in the Black Sea area, where they are more frequent than, for example, in Miletus. Complete preserved pieces are known especially in hinterland, such as tumulus I from Ciulnița (Ialomița)²⁰ and the grave 5 of tumulus 14 of Krasnogorovka III on the lower Don²¹. The short neck and the shape of the rim indicate a date rather towards the end of the 7th cent. for the two fragments. Another type, closely in shape to the Samian one, is attested at Histria (*fig. 13*), suggesting another production area in the vicinity or in relation with the island. The flat shoulder and short neck, in the centres of which the upper handle is fixed, closely resemble to the Samian items. The two grooves around the middle of the neck can often be seen on South Ionian amphoras of the time about 600 BC. The relatively thin rounded rim, the easily swollen neck as well as the absence of the wrinkle in the lower neck distinguish this piece from the Samian amphoras. This rare type may have been produced in an Ionian colony from the north.

Two pieces can be assigned to **Chian** workshops (*fig. 14-15*). Being easily recognizable due, mostly, to their typical decoration, these have been a fortunate category among Archaic amphoras. Typical for the earliest specimens is the occurrence of a painted decoration on a white slip. The development of such vessels can be followed in Histria from the late 7th century to the third quarter of the 6th cent. BC. Some pieces have been discussed and carefully described by Marcelle Lambrino²². In the Pontic area, specimens similar to the earliest

¹² ČISTOV *et al.* 2012, p. 158, pl. 1. 3.

¹³ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2008, p. 142, no. 209, pl. 18.

¹⁴ KOPYLOV 2007, p. 67, fig. 3, 14.

¹⁵ RUBAN 1991, p. 183, fig. 1, 2.

¹⁶ MONACHOV 1999 b, p. 168, 184, fig. 8; MONACHOV 2003a, p. 247, fig. 17, 2.

¹⁷ BANDUROVSKIJ & BUJNOV 2000, p. 19-20, 188, fig. 48, 1.

¹⁸ BÎRZESCU 2009, p. 122-124.

¹⁹ DUPONT 1998, p. 167; DUPONT 2005 a, p. 234-236, no. A LX and A LI fig. 17 a. b.; BÎRZESCU 2012, p. 157-158. More often have been brought to light in the west, see DOCTER 2001, p. 69.

²⁰ MARINĚSCU-BÎLCU *et al.* 2000, p. 163, fig. 10. 5.

²¹ MONACHOV 1999 a, p. 35, fig. 2, 1; MONACHOV 2003a, p. 244, fig. 14, 4.

²² LAMBRINO 1938, p. 125, fig. 63-66.

discovered in Histria, showing a short neck (H 12-14 cm), a taller rim and thick bands are only known at Berezan²³ and Apollonia²⁴. The Chian workshops have produced and exported white-slipped amphoras at least from the end of the 8th century – beginning of the 7th century BC, as the finds from Methone show²⁵. Until the end of the 7th cent., the Chian amphoras maintain a rather squat shape, their evolution being well sketched with the help of complete pieces from the Near East (Ashkelon)²⁶ and Etruria²⁷. The transition to the more slender shapes of the 6th cent. takes place towards the end of the 7th century.

From the context His 2006 T 30 fragments from at least two gray amphoras can be assigned to the workshops of **Mytilene** (*fig. 16-19*). These have a relatively thin rim, a ridge at the base of the neck and a hollow in the foot. Similar amphoras are known in other contexts from Histria, as well as from Berezan²⁸ and Taganrog have produced. As in the case of Chios, the workshops from Mytilene have produced and exported transport amphoras from the end of the 8th century BC onwards. Easily recognizable due to their color and their round section handle ending in a “rat’s tail”²⁹, the gray amphoras have often been discussed, several classifications being proposed. However, until the second half of the 7th century their evolution is not clear.

At least from the second half of the 7th century onwards, the **Aeolis** has produced amphoras similar in shape, but with an oxidant firing process. The amphora foot at the *fig. 20* is massive, without any profile, indicating a large opening of the lower body. The best known examples come from the Pontic area, from the necropolis of Orgame and from Berezan. To the workshops of Aeolis can be also assigned the neck fragment from *fig. 21*.

The rim fragments from the *fig. 22, 32* belong to an amphora type less discussed in literature. Complete items are missing in the Black Sea region, best parallels are from the Ashkelon destruction layers, where they have been described in detail³⁰. These are characterized by a rounded thin rim, a cylindrical neck and a coarse surface. Two other fragments from Histria, one of which discovered in the first archaic layer in the quarter researched in the 50’s – 60’s, indicate that these amphoras were quite well widespread in the Pontic area at the beginnings. The shape suggests North Ionia as origin.

His 2006 T 30 has also yielded a small rim fragment from a **SOS amphora** (*fig. 23*) belonging to the Late type in Johnston’ classification³¹. SOS amphoras are to be found in the early Pontic colonies, such as Borysthene³², Taganrog³³,

²³ DUPONT 2005 b, p. 46, 62, no. 1, fig. 1.

²⁴ NEDEV & GYUZELEV 2011, p. 63-71, fig. 2-7.

²⁵ BESIOS, TZIPHOUPOULOS, KOTSONAS 2012, p. 463, no. 130.

²⁶ WALDBAUM 2011, p. 314, no. 517.

²⁷ RIZZO 1990, p. 55-56, fig. 55.

²⁸ ČISTOV *et al.* 2012, p. 165-166, pl. 8-9.

²⁹ some gray amphoras of early Archaic period do not show the characteristic round handle and the “rat’s tail”, see BESIOS, TZIPHOUPOULOS, KOTSONAS 2012, p. 465, no. 132.

³⁰ WALDBAUM 2011, p. 317, no. 523-524.

³¹ JOHNSTON & JONES 1978, p. 133-134.

³² ČISTOV *et al.* 2012, p. 170, pl. 13, 1-2, 4; DUPONT 2005 b, p. 68, no. 75.

³³ LARENOK & DALLY 2002, p. 88, fig. 3; KOPYLOV 2007, p. 67, fig. 2, 1-4.

Orgame³⁴; the beginning of their import corresponds to the last phase in their evolution. Only one fragment (*fig. 24, 35*), a foot recently discovered in the sacred area, could be assigned to the Middle type by its massive shape. SOS amphoras are not rare among the first amphora imports in the Histrian sanctuary³⁵, yet they are rarely well preserved.

His 2006 T 30 did not yield two important categories, which appear in the 7th century, namely the Clazomenian and Corinthian amphoras. For **Corinth**, though being the most active production centre, yet directing its export especially towards West, it does not come unexpected seeing its poor distribution in the Black Sea area. They arrive at the end of the 7th century BC, as shown by a Corinthian A amphora foot (*fig. 34*), of which the type has recently been discussed by J.C. Sourisseau³⁶.

Regarding **Clazomenian** amphoras, their import in Histria starts in the last third of the 7th century BC. The preserved fragments recall a group of containers, which is characterized especially by a painted band around the neck and a band around the handles³⁷. Similar amphoras have been brought to light in the Giglio shipwreck of the coast of Tuscany, permitting a date towards the end of 7th century BC. The class is represented by four or five items in Histria. The first fragment comes from sector B (*fig. 25*), having been found before W.W. II. Another one (*fig. 33*) was found 2006 in the sanctuary, not far from context 06 T 30. It shows a massive beak-shaped rim, a short neck, and handles flat in the cross section. From about the upper handle root, a band is drawn, falling at a slight angle and reaching the lower part of the neck. A third amphora belonging to this type comes from the dugout in sector X/1956, its other ceramic finds dating the fragment to the first third of 6th century³⁸. Here, the painted strip on the neck is thinner, but the rim remains massive and has the same shape. It has a more slender appearance and can be considered later than the ones mentioned above. Up to now, in the Black Sea area are only known from Orgame. On account of its beak-shaped rim, another fragment from Taganrog on the Don estuary may perhaps be assigned to the class³⁹.

Another early Clazomenian type is represented by amphoras with only one band running around the lower neck. Their shape bear similarity to the first type, but their decoration with recumbent "S" on the shoulder and without crossed bands on the neck rather follows that of amphoras from the third quarter of 7th century. Other finds date a grave in Vulci, where two complete amphoras were found, in the period from the end of 7th to 570 BC. Only one fragment of a neck, which comes from the old excavations in Histria, belongs to this type.

Another amphora type belonging to this first phase is represented by a fragmentary specimen discovered in the Histrian sanctuary (*fig. 26*). It is rather to be assigned to Nord Ionian workshops, near Clazomenai. The massive beak-

³⁴ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2008, p. 145-151, no. 215.

³⁵ see also DUPONT 2000.

³⁶ SOURISSEAU 2006, p. 135.

³⁷ SEZGIN 2004, p. 173.

³⁸ DIMITRIU 1966, p. 25-27.

³⁹ KOPYLOV & LARENOK 1994, p. 51, 56, fig. 5, 2.

shaped rim, the short cylindrical neck, and the handles oval in section resemble the above-mentioned Clazomenian amphoras.

To the same early period of amphora imports at Histria belong three other types, represented by isolated fragments, showing a rather broad chronological range. One (*fig. 27*) is represented by an amphora neck related to SOS amphoras. The details of shape and decoration as well as its quality suggest either an imitation or the influence of Attic amphoras on an East Greek workshop.

The second type is given by an piece from recent excavations in the Histrian sanctuary. It shows a cylindrical neck, a well marked rounded rim, a ridge under the rim, and handles flattened in section (*fig. 28*). Similar examples have been found in Mediterranean region in contexts from the end of the 7th – beginning of the 6th century BC.

The last type comes from an important East Greek centre that had relations both the Black and the Mediterranean Seas⁴⁰. Its amphoras (*fig. 29*) are characterized a slightly swollen neck and a slender foot. Two specimens have been brought to light in contexts from the first half of the 6th century BC.

Other types widespread in the Pontic area in the second half of the 7th century BC, such as that from Tumulus TA 95 in the necropolis of Orgame⁴¹, the one from a tomb in Krasnogorovka, or the two amphoras from a tumuls in Kolomak⁴², have not yet turned up at Histria. Two bands forming an X are to be observed on the neck of such amphoras. The edge is relatively thin. A painted band runs around the lower neck. The shoulder shows a recumbent "S", as the contemporary Chian. Such amphoras have turned up in Abdera and the Black Sea area⁴³. Initially considered Chian, than Clazomenian, the amphoras of this type seem rather to be related to an amphora type, in literature known as Samos-Zeest type, that had its main production in Northern Ionia.

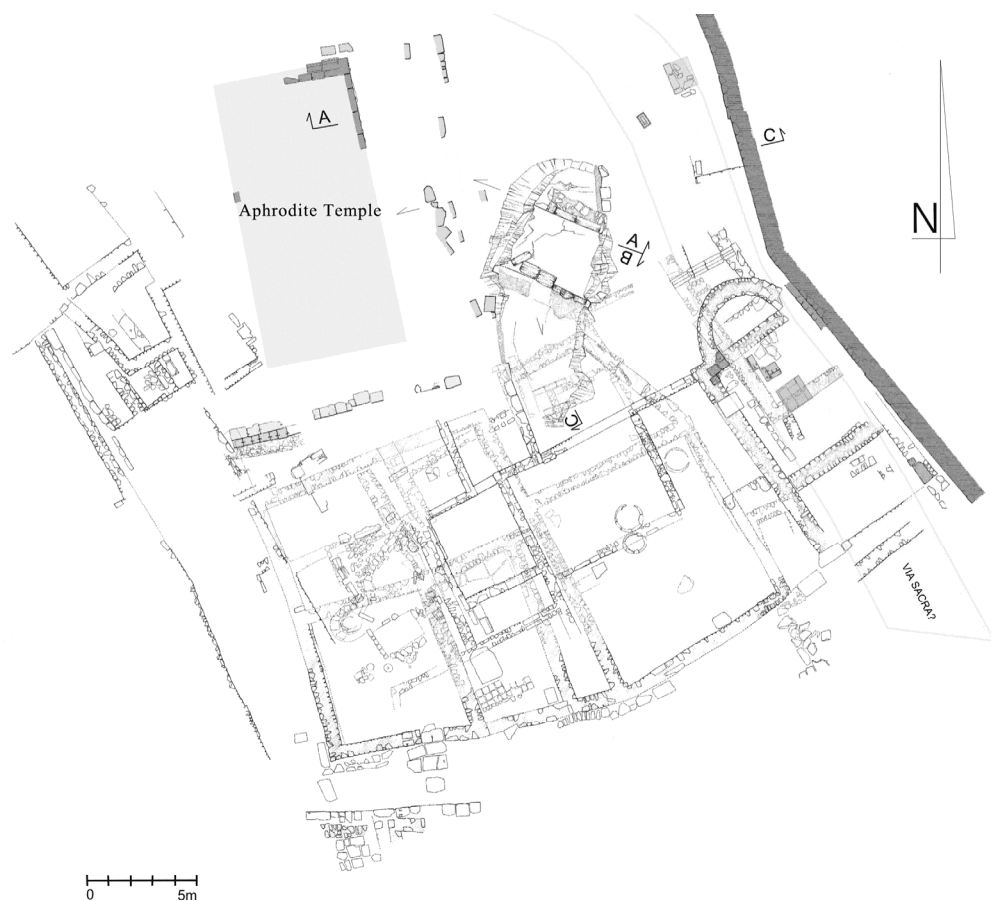
The discoveries at Histria reveal that close contacts existed between the young colony and the Aegean world in the second half of the 7th century BC. What characterizes Histria, specially at the end of the century, is the diversity of amphora types.

⁴⁰ GREENE, LAWALL, POLZER 2008, p. 693, fig. 12.

⁴¹ LUNGU 2001, p. 178, fig. 7; MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2008, no. 106, pl. 11.

⁴² MONACHOV 1999 a, p. 34, fig. 1; MONACHOV 1999 b, p. 186, fig. 15.

⁴³ see DUPONT & SKARLATIDOU 2005.



**Fig. 1 – Histria. Plan of the North-Eastern sanctuary („Sacred area”)
(M. Mărgineanu-Cârstoiu, V. Apostol).**

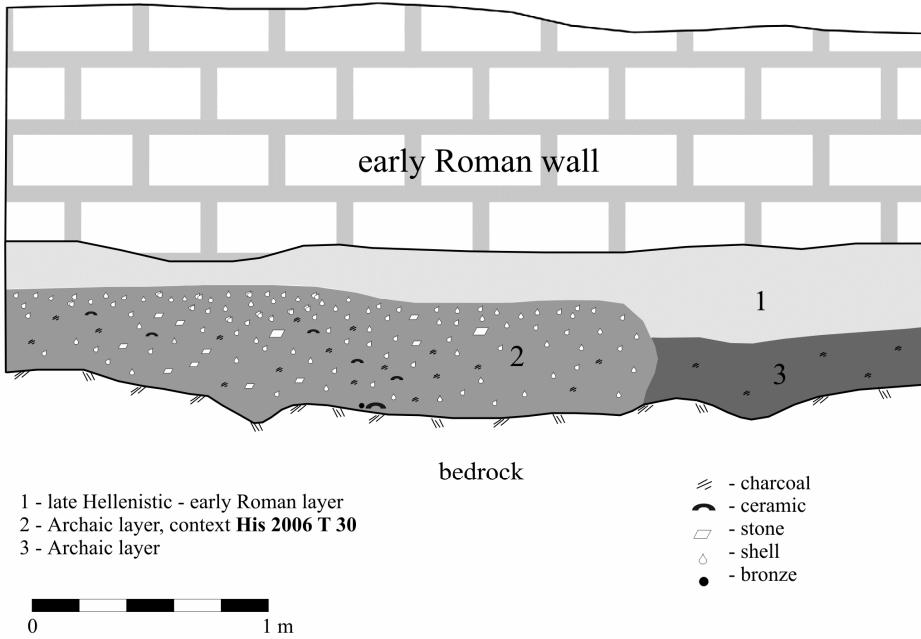


Fig. 2 – Histria. Area A6, Southern section.

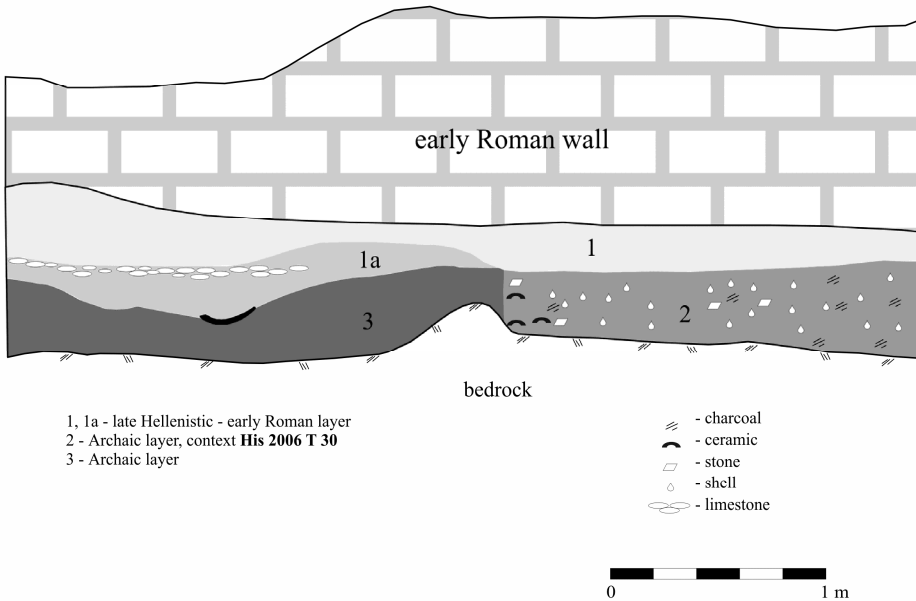


Fig. 3 – Histria. Area A6, Eastern section.

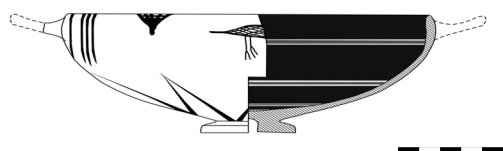


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

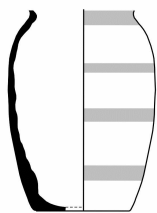


Fig. 6

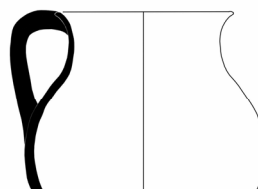


Fig. 7

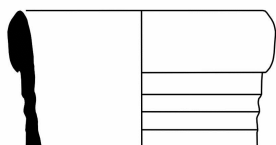


Fig. 8

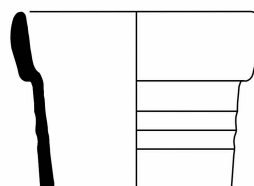


Fig. 9

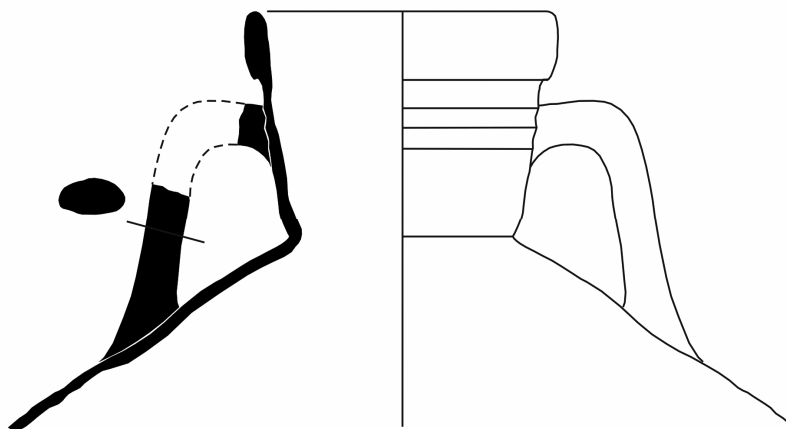


Fig. 10

Fig. 4 – His 2006 T 30, Nord Ionian bird bowl; Fig. 5 – His 2006 T 30, Nord Ionian bowl; Fig. 6 – His 2006 T 30, small banded Ionian jug; Fig. 7 – His 2006 T 30, cooking pot; Fig. 8-10 – His 2006 T 30, Milesian amphoras.

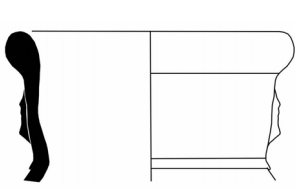


Fig. 11

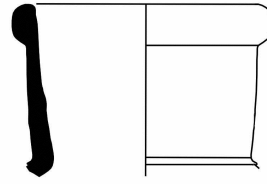


Fig. 12

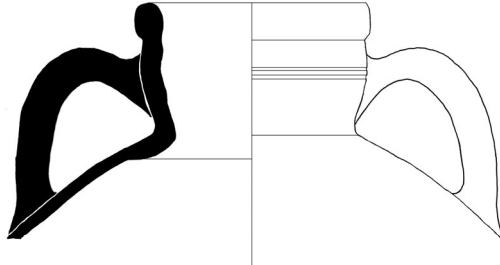


Fig. 13

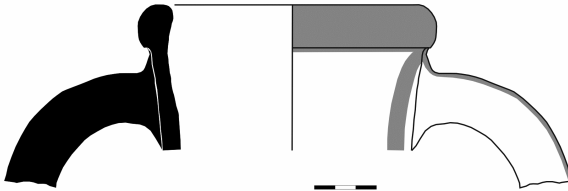


Fig. 14

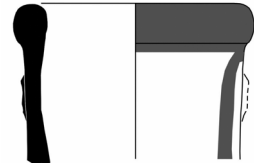


Fig. 15

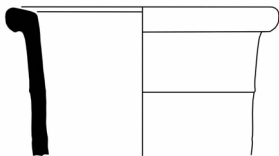


Fig. 16

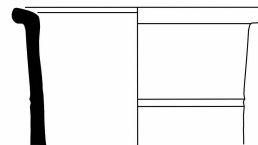


Fig. 18

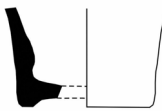


Fig. 17



Fig. 19

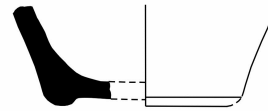


Fig. 20

Fig. 11-12 – His 2006 T 30, Samian amphoras; Fig. 13 – His 1960 T 6, Ionian amphora, unknown center; Fig. 14-15 – His 2006 T 30, Chian white-slipped amphoras; Fig. 16-19 – His 2006 T 30, Mytilenean gray amphoras; Fig. 20 – His 2006 T 30, Aeolian amphora.

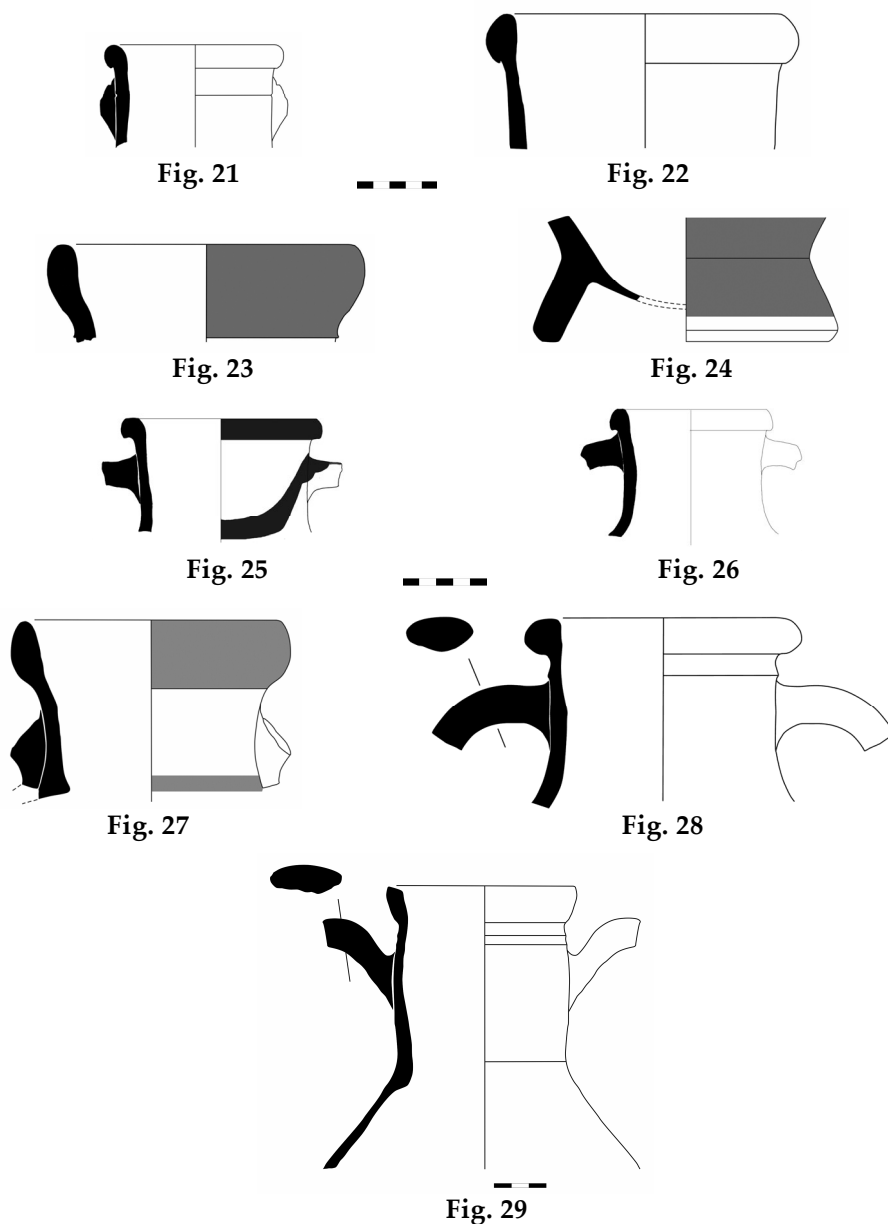


Fig. 21 – His 2006 T 30, Aeolian amphora; Fig. 22 – His 2006 T 30, rim of a North Ionian amphora, unknown centre; Fig. 23 – His 2006 T 30, rim of a Late SOS amphora; Fig. 24 – His 2006 T 6.5, foot of a Middle SOS amphora; Fig. 25 – His 1927-1942, V 8353 + V 8263, neck of a Clazomenian amphora; Fig. 26 – His 1960 T 6, neck of a North Ionian? amphora; Fig. 27 – His 1927-1942, V 8262 + V 8259, Ionian banded amphora, unknown centre; Fig. 28 – His 2007 T 6, Ionian amphora, unknown centre; Fig. 29 – His 2011 T 2.1, neck of an Ionian? amphora, unknown centre.



Fig. 30



Fig. 31



Fig. 32



Fig. 33



Fig. 34



Fig. 35

- Fig. 30-31 – His 2006 T 30, Milesian amphoras;
 Fig. 32 – His 2006 T 30, rim of a North Ionian amphora, unknown centre;
 Fig. 33 – His 2006 T 37, neck fragment of a Clazomenian amphora;
 Fig. 34 – His 2011 T 2, foot fragment of a Corinthian A amphora;
 Fig. 35 – His 2006 T 6.5, foot of a Middle SOS amphora.